THE NEW IDEAL.

VOL. III. FEBRUARY, 1890. No. 2.

EDITORIAL.

GENERAL TOPICS.

POVERTY AND CHARACTER.

"MAKE them well off; then instruct them." So quotes Capt. Adams—*from Confucius!* One grand soul, then, away back there in the dim times of China, saw what "the opposition" in enlightened Europe and America, in 1890, still cannot or will not see! Make them stand on their heads, then they can walk! Is not that what much of the "counsel" for the "poor" to-day amounts to? But Confucius well said, Help them to stand properly on their feet, then teach them to walk—and by-and-by they will gladly and hopefully go alone.

THE F. R. A. SOCIAL SCIENCE LECTURES.

THE first lecture in the Sunday-afternoon Social Science course, under the auspices of the Free Religious Association, was given in Boston on Sunday, January 19, in Horticultural Hall. An unexpectedly large and earnest audience was present. The lecturer was Rev. M. J. Savage, and his topic, "Social Dreams." The other lectures, dates, and speakers, are as follows: Jan. 26, "The Interdependence of Men," Edward Atkinson; Feb. 2, "Are the Poor growing Poorer?" Rev. John G. Brooks; Feb. 9, Mrs. Mary A. Livermore; Feb. 16, "Socialism and the Workingman," George E. McNeill (the recognized representative of the workingmen of Boston); Feb. 23, "Paternalism vs. Freedom," Wm. Lloyd Garrison; March 2, "Looking Backward," Wm. J. Potter; March 9, "The Way into the Promised Land," Rev. R. Heber Newton.

EDITOR TODD ON TEMPERANCE.

WE think the words of Editor W. G. Todd, of the *Teacher's Outlook*, in the current issue of THE NEW IDEAL, well worthy of serious study. Here is no waste of time and energy in mere gibes at liquor or the gin-shop; nor

fruitless indictment of poverty-stricken wretches who, it is readily acknowledged, do often wastefully spend much of their small earnings in the sickening horror of self-poisoning. Out of his own varied experience and observation as worker, as minister, and as editor, Mr. Todd tries to go back of "effect," back even of immediate "cause," and seeks out *the reason of the "cause."* Without regard to the connection of his article with "Nationalism," his temperance homily may well be taken to heart. Hasten the day when the "guardian angel" of Man's growing Good-will shall indeed, with her white wings, waft away the "foul odors" of a myriad myriad "homes," and out of her exhaustless natural bounty cause the thousand crying "lacks" of the majority of human lives to cease.

MR. MARTIN'S RATIONAL SERVICE-BOOK.

MR. MARTIN'S little book of "rational" Responsive Readings, for Sunday Schools and the Home, has come from the press and is now in the bindery. It is, in almost every way, excellent. In our next issue we shall quote one or two of its Sections, and we have no question that, if they could but see a copy (its price will be low), hundreds of the readers of THE NEW IDEAL would desire the book. It is of the hope and strength and onward-looking of all lands and times.

A "LIBERAL" WOMAN-SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION.

IT is time that there existed in this country an Association of the nature hinted by Mrs. Gage in our Correspondence Department. There is more than one needed reform to-day, from desired participation in which many freethinking men and women are conscientiously debarred, in-as-much as, at present, inextricably mixed with the reforms in question are the crudest of "Christian" dogmas and the strongly maintained purpose of purely "Christian" propagandism. This is a brave new movement, in the right direction, and Mrs. Gage should be enthusiastically encouraged.

NATURE-DEEP.

THE Free Religious Association is cosmopolitan. Not only is its "platform" free "religiously," to Orthodox and heterodox, but in the election and appointment of its officers it gladly recognizes men and women of all nationalities, all shades of social and political thought — men and women (literally) "of all colors." On our Correspondence page, in his endeavor to "help the colored man," Mr. Holland would have Hon. Frederick Douglass made a Vice-President of the Association. But Mr. Douglass already enjoys that dignity — his name will be found in the official list as printed

in THE NEW IDEAL for July last. One sensible way, by-the-by, in which to begin to "help the 'colored man'," would be, we hold, to recognize, and in our speech conform to the recognition, that our world-brethren of darker skin are not in reality "colored," but born black. And there is more than a pleasantry here. The intention goes Nature-deep.

FOURTEEN YEARS AMONG THE POOR.

TO ALL who have known the extent and prominence of Mrs. Dietrick's philanthropic work, both public and private, in various cities but perhaps especially in the neighborhood of Cincinnati, her word in this issue will be read with large expectation. "Fourteen years of my mature life I have spent in daily work among the poor, studying, and trying to help this problem towards a solution, and I feel practically convinced that much of their trouble arises from injudicious and unfair advisers. May I state the case as I see it?" Having been asked to contribute an article to the pages of THE NEW IDEAL, the above note accompanied her manuscript.

THE QUESTION OF TAXATION.

AT the "Barnard Memorial," on Warrenton Street, Boston, under the charge of Mr. Locke, one series of free lectures or addresses, on important current topics, follows another this Winter with gratifying frequency. The series next approaching, on "Taxation," to be given on consecutive Saturday evenings, beginning January 25, includes the following topics and speakers: "Tariff for Protection, or for Revenue only?" Hon. Harvey N. Shephard and David H. Rice; "Defence of the Massachusetts System of Taxation," Hon. Thomas Hills (Chairman of Assessors of Boston); "The Single Tax," Wm. Lloyd Garrison; "An End to Tax Systems," Laurence Gronlund (author of Co-operative Commonwealth); "No Taxation without Representation," Mrs. Abbie Morton Diaz (President Woman's Industrial Union).

A POPULAR COMPLAINT AT LAST ANSWERED.

ONLY one deep, serious, deserved, and "popular" complaint has come to the editor concerning THE NEW IDEAL during the past year. That complaint has gradually increased to such an extent, and has come of late from so many quarters, that in this issue it is met, in the only practical way apparent. It will now, for a time, be almost impossible for any one to justly claim that the editor himself is never at sufficient length represented in his own paper! Long as it is, however, lack of space has compelled him to cut out all the "best parts" of "Christianity and Forgiveness"—with which artless assertion, though in another sense, and with the ascription of the fact to a far different

reason, he fears many a good Orthodox brother, on reading the discourse, would too painfully agree!

"CONCERNING CHRISTMAS."

How MANY are there, to-day, who, amid the jollity and good-will of "Christmas-time," really associate the holiday, in any serious, consistent way, with the birth of the so-called "Christ"? Mr. Whipple might well, under supposable rigid Orthodox tyranny, call on us to stop and think — and then to rebel. And his argument at any time is good and valuable. But the Orthodox hold on the masses, to-day, except for social reasons or amusement's sake, is "really very mild." Men are lured to the Manger, now, not any longer driven. A few — an always lessening number — of strict church-folk may indeed still, at Christ-mass, offer mass for or even to the "Christ"; but the vast majority of merry-makers, in their delight and their "giving," think only of Human Good-will, and deify only Human Answerers of Human Need. The tendency in Nature and in Man to-day is not towards the unhealthful miscellaneous fictions of New Testament "narratives," but towards wholesome particular demonstrations of Reason, and of true Conformity to Nature's Order. Moreover, for a "traditional" holding to the Christmas good-will and jollity, if we wish such, we need not feel dependent on the distortions of the "church." All around the world, — in Persia, in Egypt, in Mexico, in Greece, in Britain, — long before the date when Jesus is supposed to have been born in Palestine, there were lights and rejoicings, and feasting, and decorations, and giving of gifts, on that very day of all the year which, through thirteen centuries, the Christian church has set apart for especial praises as the Birthday of its reputed founder. Through thirteen centuries, not eighteen; for, as is now well known, it was not until some time during the fifth century of our present era that the church, in utter ignorance of the true date of Jesus' birth, selected the great festival-day of all the world, — the festival-day of the "heathen" (one of the first days following the Winter Solstice), — as its day of best policy for commemorating the entrance into this earthly life of the Great-heart it wished to deify. And the re-birth of the Sun-God amid Winter's wildness, promising once more, after cold and cheerlessness, the coming again, in due time, of Springtide beauty and blossom, and of Summer's richness and fruit! — *why not*, at such time, hang for our children, still, the "evergreen boughs with baubles bright," and have all the jollity we wish? A few years more, and traditional Christianity will be forever buried, in a sepulcher rockier than that from which its "Christ" never in truth reappeared: but Nature will not cease to be true,

solar warmth will still recur, men's hearts will bound to greet it, children will laugh and romp beneath Ygdrasil; and the world will be the merrier, not the less merry, that it has utterly forgotten all the dark, cruel myths that bound its finest joys to skeletons and hells. Christmas in the future shall be Merry Christmas indeed.

GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

BELLAMY'S CRITIC CRITICIZED.

If I attempt to criticize the fair-minded critic of Mr. Bellamy in The New Ideal for January, it is not because I feel that the author of "Looking Backward" needs my assistance, or that I am roused to do this by any apparent willing injustice on the part of Mr. Potter, who so long has stood before the world as a fearless, outspoken and conscientious thinker, free from the narrowness of new as well as of traditional prejudices. I am tempted to reply to Mr. Potter's objections because I feel that varied experiences contribute to the roundedness of any truth that is being ensphered, and because in this particular case my own experience has included some of the humbler walks of life which do not have full representation, and from which perhaps something of truth may be gained.

While Nationalism has not arisen in the ranks, nor is in any way the especial advocate of the exclusive rights, of the so-called laboring-man, and is thus very different from most forms of Socialism; while it strikes directly the universal center of society and intimately concerns every class, still there is no one point where we can better see the social heart and feel the social pulse than in man in his "undress uniform,"—man in the ranks of labor. Too often, from our daily associations with educated and influential men, we look down upon the "common men" about us, imagining, not experiencing their perils, their pains, their hopes and ambitions, and need to go through a preparatory schooling in social consecration no less effective than that experienced by the Apostle Peter at Joppa, when he learned that there was "nothing common or unclean." This idea has been suggested to me by certain phrases in the criticism I would reply to, which phrases, while they cannot, to any one who knows Mr. Potter, reveal any exalted indifference on his part to the humblest of humanity, do yet show a conventional form of expression very common, and very unlike that glad recognition of wealth in the common human heart, human brain and human muscle, which Nationalism manifests. I mention this here merely to dispose of it without further allusion.

Mr. Potter offsets Mr. Bellamy's statement that "nineteen-twentieths" of present crimes are due to "inequalities in the possessions of individuals," by the statistics of courts, which "all agree that from two-thirds to nine-tenths of the various crimes that make the business of the courts are instigated by the vicious appetite that leads to drunkenness." Taken in connection with their context, these lines assert intemperance to be the "cause" of this amount of crime. Mr. Potter, as a metaphysician and student of modern science, should be well acquainted with the difficulties that may arise in any statement of "cause" as more than a transient phenomenon, or form of motion. It is the full explanation of its causative nature that we want,— its *reasons*. The basic reasons, or grounds by which intemperance supports crime, are found back of *both*. Are they in the term "vicious appetite"? Its severe form is, also, phenomenal, and at most can give only a Nicean explanation. Either this "vicious appetite" is inborn in men, in which case it *should* be "treated in hospitals as hereditary infirmity," as proposed by Mr. Bellamy, or it is a growth cultivated by circumstances. If the former, then we have no adequate means, or indeed adequate desire for means, that either are or can be made efficient as a remedy, in a community absorbed in money production at moral cost. If the latter, then whether "vicious appetite" is a product of circumstances, or merely increased by their cultivation, we have no means of effectively shaping these circumstances until society more or less assumes that scientific form which Nationalism offers.

That we have not the means of shaping circumstances is evident from our continuous herculean moral efforts and small accruing results. The mountain, in violent throes, conceives every year, and, in some part of the land, brings forth a mouse. It is difficult, to-day, to build real, moral work on its legitimate foundation. It is not easy to really enter into people's lives and become a force in their evolution, to such an extent are they crowded with temporary cross purposes, arising in money-getting. It is easy to make a show of doing good as a matter of business. We are ruled by the love of money and the social standards of money, on every hand. Its tinseled tests of distinction outweigh individual worth, and corrupt the habits of the mechanic as effectively as those of the youth born in wealth. It controls politics for its further aggrandizement, and shapes moral reform into ostentatious shows, in which it accomplishes almost nothing of good. If we take the three main points of Mr. Potter's criticism,— intemperance, sexual vice, and want of individual responsibility,— we find that society, *under its present system of individual*

enterprises, is absolutely powerless to restrain the first two, and can only imperfectly manage the last by coercion through threatened starvation. The details which demonstrate this as a fact will become apparent as we proceed.

Mr. Potter indicates the necessity for going beyond immediate causes to their reasons, by negatively suggesting that we imagine them, when he says that neither the "poverty that does sometimes drive its victims to spend the last penny for a soothing draught to the land of oblivion, nor the low animal plane of existence to which constant drudging toil holds men almost perforce, sufficiently accounts for the enormous power of the appetite for intoxicating drinks." Very true, and very suggestive. Bad as are the conditions of poverty,—of poverty actually experienced up to the ragged edge of desperation; bad as is toil so unremitting as to dull all aspirations, stifle all hopes, and fit the mind for only the enjoyment of physical pleasures; bad as are these conditions which are the direct product of our present competitive system of business, they are only a few of the factors in the problem.

There are men who, not being employed, are desperate not for self but for others, yet who are tempted to take the first steps in the formation of this appetite. One million and often twice that number of idle men have, of late years, constantly traveled the streets of our cities and villages. The great majority of them, even under present conditions, would gladly be cursed with "constant drudging toil," and would not feel that "the low animal plane of existence" to which our critic says it "holds men almost perforce" was quite so "animal" as the competition and struggle with their fellow-men over every job in the market, like scarcely more swinish forms of life over a narrow trough. These idle men are not free like those under Nationalism, whose idleness, past the forty-fifth year, our critic fears. They are men driven to desperation for work because loved-ones are dependent upon them, and their state of mind is not conducive to sustain their natural honor in regard to the moral character of the employment offered. Here, with this breaking down of pride and integrity, often comes the introduction to the saloon; and it all follows lines laid down by the power of money.

Another reason: These men often do not have enough to eat, and often their meals are irregular and unwholesomely furnished. From personal observation and the recitals of truthful sufferers, I have learned that large numbers of workingmen take to drink and the use of tobacco from a feeling of faintness. The artificial stimulant relieves them with its mess of pottage, which thereby takes a lien on their nobler birthright. This is especially true in cities

where the bar-room "free-lunch" abounds, and the appetite is cultivated with all the greater rapidity where it is fertilized with that decomposition of hospitality — the social "treat."

Besides these idle men, there is, further, a host who cultivate the "vicious appetite" by their enforced irregular and unwholesome living. Their home habits and all their surroundings, fixed by their small income under the present unalterable laws of money-getting, are conducive to the creation of a love of stimulants. The "vicious appetite" is built upon a good, but abused, normal appetite; and not only is this the case with grown men and women, but a great army of children is being raised up in this country whose every-day food furnishes the fruitful germs of inebriety. I have watched the growth of this induced love of stimulants, not only in mining districts and in manufacturing towns, and amidst the unhealthful surroundings of midnight workers, speculators and traders, and those who constitute the army of workers upon the daily press, but on Southern plantations and frontier stock-ranges, where the regular rations of corn-bread, bacon and black coffee, twenty-one times a week, made a path as straight to the whiskey-saloon as the trail of the cattle from drought-burned prairies to the distant stream of water. Truly, I think if any guardian-angel were to come on earth to-day to shelter homes against this "vicious appetite," she would neither strive nor cry before saloons, nor assist in conducting political campaigns, but her wings would purify the home of foul odors, for which competitive speculation in house-lots is largely responsible; and she would teach that systematized method of disposing of home-work, and that healthful method of cooking nourishing food, which the money-engendered anxieties of the day so powerfully aid in preventing,— causes almost entirely removed under the system of Nationalism.

Again, the steps to this "vicious appetite" are laid directly by our business habits. They are steps hewn into the very structure of the competitive system of trade, and polished by the feet of approved customs. The vast army of traveling-salesmen that overrun this country would be entirely useless in any wise economy of distribution; and yet, in their ranks, intellects naturally keen are not only trained to the finest edge of penetration in order to reach beneath the outside defences of man, but trained to create a leverage in trade out of his weakest side. That side, I need not remark, is often found by the pocket-flask, especially in a prohibition State. Western cities, much more than Eastern, present a speculative, trading phase of existence. The traders in real-estate, all the way from a

prospective city down to a mortgaged prairie-lot, everywhere abound, and their far-reaching, octopus grasp upon the "natural opportunities" of man is not only an unmitigated curse, from whose presence we pray Nationalism to relieve us speedily, but these speculators are weak-side seekers of the worst stamp, and polish well the steps that lead to the "vicious appetite." These, with the "agent," who is not only like the poor in being ever with us, but also in the personal qualifications of the successful mendicant, are a few of the mischief-making productions of our social system of private push. Money is their god.

But the same system also makes evil agencies of our own best powers, so that we create this vicious appetite also from *within*. The eager strife to reach some prize for which another is striving; the feverish ambition to attain some coveted goal; the effort to force one more hour's work from Nature's storehouse of energy by some foreign stimulant,—all these arise out of our false, competitive life, and furnish reasons for that appetite which, when grown, takes its place upon the statistics of courts as the cause of crime.

Then, too, not only by the outer and the inner temptations, created by a false society, is the appetite produced; not only are alcoholic drinks rendered capable of our speedy ruin when indulgence in them is thus facilitated, but the love of money,—yes, the love of money *to-day*, and not alone in the "very primitive and simple state of society" "nearly two thousand years ago,"—adulterates this demon of mischief until it is "ten-fold more the child of hell than at first." Under the direct influence of money employed, in their thirst for greater gain, by those already wealthy, in adulteration which creates thirst as well as madness, the worst of the burdens of "private enterprise" is put upon the morals of a long-suffering people, and a state of intemperance is produced far greater than could ever exist even under "free rum," manufactured and sold in its purity by government. No: the creation of this appetite is not alone caused by "poverty and constant toil": it is even more directly created by wealthy whiskey-trusts, who shape legislation, and often have a controlling influence even in temperance-reforms. Our present management of temperance-reform is mismanagement, and during the past half century nothing worth mentioning has been accomplished by it, nor can be until the manufacture and sale of all alcoholic drinks come under government control. On this point I must not venture in this criticism, but I would like to refer the reader who wishes for more light to an article in the *Nationalist* for December, entitled, "A Solution of the Liquor Problem," by Geo. W. Evans,

of Boston. Most readers will not agree with it all, but it is worth reading, and worthy to be sent abroad throughout the land as the best temperance-tract of the season.

The above is a portion of the answer I would make to Mr. Potter's January criticism. In a subsequent article I will treat the matter of the anticipated larger opportunity, under Nationalism, for sexual vice, and the matter of the imagined speedy "rebellion" on the part of the citizen against the rigid "discipline" of the State,—the other main hindrances, in Mr. Potter's idea, to the success of Nationalism.

W. G. Todd.

WHERE IS THE REMEDY?

In the presence of men burning with a bitter sense of misery and discomfort, it may seem a mere aggravation to say there is no possibility of alleviation unless the search for relief be made with clear, cool head; yet, nevertheless, that is a truth which cannot be made too manifest. There is deep significance in the statement which tradition gives us, that the great teachers of humanity have ever fitted themselves for their self-appointed mission of helping mankind, by first going apart from men to think out the problem of life in a solitude undisturbed by the prejudice and passion filling the air wherever the daily struggle for existence is fermenting.

To one who in this spirit looks out over the contending factions in our great industrial world, the first truth that appears is, Behold how these men misunderstand each other! Cheek by jowl though they may be in crowded cities, hearing each other's words and reading each other's thought, none the less is there a mental gulf between them which must be bridged before employer and laborer can perceive that "united we stand, divided we fall" should be received as a working-principle, if humanity as a whole is ever to be prosperous and happy. But it is upon the laborer that this truth needs most, just now, to be impressed. The way to union certainly cannot lie through *hate*, and yet those who have written in the interests of the poor for the last two thousand years have been — albeit unconsciously — ever steadily fanning the flame of hatred in the hearts of the poor towards the rich. In treating the poor as if they were deliberately prepared victims whom the rich had consciously used as a ladder for climbing into power, an equal injustice is done to both — robbing the poor of self-responsibility and confidence, and ascribing too great prescience and omnipotence to the rich.

We as a whole are the product of twenty centuries of training wherein hysterical emotion has been steadily cultivated at the expense of reason and investigation; so it is little wonder that we make strange blunders in beginning to examine ourselves and our condition. But this question as to the cruelty of rich to poor is one to be judged rather by a review of the long scroll of history, than by a hasty plunge into the seething ocean of discontent, whose waters bubble, bubble with toil and trouble around and about us here to-day. The physician of our body social and industrial is but a quack if he knows no *more* than that set forth on the side of Henry George and his compeers, or no more than that on the side of any other one agitator. To understand clearly this disease he must study its past from every standpoint, and know exactly what experiments have been tried for its alleviation, what have been their results, and from that, as far as possible, judge what chances may be for the success of other experiments within his power.

So long as men imagined that an all-powerful Father in heaven had intentionally planted one soul in the most favorable soil for development, and another where it could barely manage to cling to life, it is no wonder that a dreadful confusion of ideas prevailed among high and low. It relieved men themselves of their responsibility for their own and their children's shortcomings. The rich man took his riches as a matter of course, and gave alms to the poor as interest paid to God for his favoritism in making the loan. It was supposed that to one God gave riches, to the other his protection and a promise to make up in the next world whatever was lacking in this. Thus all religions contain urgent commands to give alms to the poor, and to support the helpless. But never until to-day has there been a religion which devoted itself to teaching the poor man the best way to take matters into his own hands and improve his own position. It is a religion which spreads wide the unerring truth, "Plant ignorance and you will reap poverty, as surely as the acorn yields the oak."

This religion has one gospel, composed of three words, "Knowledge is power": one sermon, "Love to God is shown by love to your neighbor"; and its "churches" are free kindergartens, technical schools, industrial schools, public schools, free libraries, free laboratories, and workshops. It is a religion which promulgates the doctrine that by the eternal laws of nature each man must *work out his own salvation.* One man may lead a horse to the water, but a hundred men cannot force him to drink;—all they can do is to stimulate his thirst.

Now, the working-man, if he would be dispassionately just, should ask himself who is most actively spreading this gospel of to-day?

The rich man may be selfish and tyrannical, and narrow in his views of human relations; but is not he just as much a product of circumstances set in motion before his birth as is the poor man? What are we all but the blind leading the blind, oft falling into the ditch together, and requiring each the other's love and mutual forbearance without regard to the question of who is rich and who is poor? In this country, where all that present human ingenuity can do has been set on foot to raise the general condition; where fortunes are made, more often than inherited; where thoughtful men and women are earnestly striving to increase the sum of brotherly love, and to give every one an equal chance in the race for life, what is the first requisite to insure a man's success? What is it that raises the uneducated rail-splitter to the President's chair? the factory-girl to wealth and fame as an authoress? the canal-boat boy to the kingship of capitalists? It is all embodied in one word,—self-control. The Astors, the Vanderbilts, the Lincolns of to-day are reaping the benefit of those native qualities which enabled their ancestors to make the most of their opportunities instead of prodigally wasting them, —just as surely as the descendants of poor Margaret, the Mother of "the Jukes," to-day reap the results of her ignorance and want of thought for the future.

If it is better for humanity that a few men shall not monopolize all the wealth, we must show why; and the reason must be one that appeals to the self-interest of the rich as well as of the poor, unless we want to receive the retort of the hard-hearted, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Pulling down the rich by force will only bury the poor in the ruins. Lifting up the poor by education gives them a share in the lever that moves the world. But how is it possible, with the best intentions, to amicably discuss a question of mutual interest, where one side stubbornly assumes in advance the attitude of an innocent victim, and charges the man born strong with being the cause of the weakness of his brother? Surely, the absurdity of this is apparent. The only free-born human creature that has any right to blame another for the circumstances that surround it, is the child not well-born, who can justly reproach its parents if it is flung headlong into a life of deprivation and insufficient opportunity.

It is not so often *wilful* selfishness and tyranny on the part of an employer that works to the injury of his workmen, as it is that employers also are too often short-sighted beings, caught in the cogs of this ponderous universe, knowing not exactly how to best extricate themselves and others from its remorseless grinding. Civilization is too complicated a mechanism to permit the hasty thrusting in of a

meddlesome hand by any cobbler who thinks he can force the world into what he considers right. Laws to raise wages in this business, or to shorten hours in that, would, in many cases, simply result in the shutting up of the shops thus meddled with. For what is it that makes wages in any particular employment high? Scarcity of laborers in that employment. What makes the struggle for subsistence in certain branches bitter? Excess of strugglers in that particular branch of work. Where are wages high? Where unusual skill is required of the laborer. Where are wages low? Where so little skill is needed that any one can crowd into the ranks of competition amongst laborers. A man who increased the stock to a hundred on a farm which would only keep fifty, would be very foolish if he either expected his neighbors to provide food for them all, or that by some hocus-pocus they could all be satisfied.

Why have we had tens of thousands of starving needlewomen? Simply because, during generation after generation, sewing was the only work considered respectable for the average woman in earning money. In consequence, a boat which could have comfortably carried a certain number was hopelessly swamped, by the enormous overplus who threw themselves in blind despair upon it. What is the reason that thousands of men toil painfully at hard work which yields them a bare pittance, while another earns by an hour's mental labor more than any one of those hard toilers could in a month's or perhaps even a year's industry? Is it not because of mere brute force there is a vastly larger supply than of keen and cultivated brains?

The laboring man, then, has two methods of increasing his wages; either by educating himself to mount to where there is more room; or, if it is too late for that, to see that his sons are prepared for work where laborers are fewer. We climb up, not on a living ladder of present workmen, but on the accumulated force and wisdom of our individual progenitors.

No one who studies history can reasonably assume that in all ages men have not tried sincerely to do their duty as they saw it. To rage because the outcome has not been satisfactory is like storming at the heavens because they do *not* temper the wind to the shorn lamb. We simply made a bad start in life by assuming that we were such particular favorites of heaven that, like the lilies of the field, we need take no very long look ahead for the morrow, inasmuch as the Lord would provide. The rich, as well as the poor, regarded this world as a wretched way-station to a better world, where all wrongs would be made right; it is little wonder, therefore, that both failed to appreciate what might be done to improve this world in a permanent way. Their only idea was that of *cure*; and the wiser method of *prevention* is

even yet scarcely introduced amongst us. The rich have failed to alleviate woes, through their ignorance of the real situation; just as the poor have gone on perpetuating theirs from the same cause.

It looks like an easy thing to improve a workingman's condition by giving him higher wages and more leisure; but does not everything depend, after all, on his management of those wages and the employment of his leisure? In almost every mill or factory may be found two men starting with equal wages, one of whom will rise steadily, while the other will as steadily lose ground, or barely hold his own. The same ladder is before both. Where then lies the inherent defect which makes one fail to follow the other's upward round? Often the cause is so remote from the employer's "greed" or generosity, as to be a question of the judgment or foresight with which two workmen selected wives.

Let us by all means foster the divine discontent which elevates, but at the same time let us not neglect the philosophy which teaches a man to accept the palpable proof of his own inborn limitations. Many of the solutions for the labor problems of the future can only be worked out by beginning at the cradles of to-day.

ELLEN BATTELLE DIETRICK.

THE RELATIVITY OF KNOWLEDGE.*

As this is a Sunday evening lecture, I suppose it is proper to begin with a text. I select the following, therefore:

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven."—*Gen. xi.*, 4.

The childish notion expressed in these words is to-day so palpably absurd that a boy of ten years of age would laugh at it, if it were seriously proposed. As transparently ridiculous as it is in physics, the same notion is quite common in philosophy. Men expect to build towers of speculation whose tops can reach the Absolute. The projectors of Babel's tower no more seriously hoped to touch the region known as heaven than do our philosophers, who strive to know things as they are in themselves, to reach the indeterminate. Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo cut away the foundations from the earth and left it floating in the ocean of immensity. Hume and Kant, Berkeley and Spencer, cut away the foundations of the supposed stability of truth, and left it a tiny speck amid the endless deep. A tower

* COPYRIGHT, 1889, by James H. West, Publisher. (Extract from *Modern Science Essayist*, No. 18.)

from either foundation reaching to the infinite is simply ludicrous in its absurdity. All we know or ever hope to know is practically wiped out when contrasted with the infinite. Two points along any straight line that are at an equal distance from any third point, and in the same direction, must be exactly together, and are not two points at all. From our first item of knowledge to the end of endless knowledge is no farther than from our last item to the same. All we can grasp in thought pales into nothingness before the infinite ocean of facts. If a worm cannot compass our conception of the universe with its limited fund of experience, neither can we compass that of a being millions on millions of times farther beyond us in progress than we are beyond a worm.

From the single sense of the lowest animal, to the most accurately adjusted five senses of the highest Caucasian, is but a narrow step. We are not one whit nearer that endlessness of sense-potentiality here depicted for the knowable than is the lowest creature that lives and breathes. Its knowledge of the actual state of the heart of things is as great as ours. It is as near the final synthesis of the awful abyss of endless fact as we are or ever shall be, though we may go on trying to approach it forever and forever. Science may explain and explain, yet, after all, what do her explanations amount to, before this awful problem that our conceit thinks it has solved? Physics and chemistry, biology and astronomy, are all vying with each other in trying to explain all things as modes of motion.

Our friend Mr. Perrin has taken this cue, and worked out a philosophy where everything is knowable.* He asks us if motion is not the final fact of experience; if all facts are not at last resolvable into facts of motion. Well, what if this be so? Suppose we can show that we have no evidence of the existence of motion? Even if we acknowledge that things do actually move, instead of merely appearing to do so, we can still ask him to tell us how he can have motion unless there is something, not itself motion, that can be moved. If all human experiences are due to motions, what is the unknown something that makes motion possible? On a ship coming from Liverpool to New York, if you walk from stem to stern at the rate of three miles an hour, you may be very certain that you are moving, and those of your fellow-passengers who see you are equally positive. If the boat is going with just the same speed in the opposite direction, it becomes evident that you were all mistaken. As you walked eastward you no doubt were confident of the direction of your

* The Religion of Philosophy. By Raymond S. Perrin.

motion; yet if the boat was going thirty miles per hour in the opposite direction, it is clear that instead of going three miles eastward, as you at first believed, you were really going twenty-seven miles an hour westward. But even this correction can be challenged. The earth carries boat, ocean and passengers at a rate of about 1,000 miles per hour eastward, so that it seems you are going East after all at the rate of about 973 miles per hour. Again, this can be challenged; for the orbital motion changes all our previous computations. Once more, this last can be challenged, for the movement of the solar system among the fixed stars must be considered. Motion cancels motion as we go along in our discoveries, until we finally see that, for aught we know to the contrary, every motion ever made, considered absolutely, may be a mere illusion of sense, due to position, as in the cases we have noted.

In considering the physiology of sensation, this cancellation becomes still more complete. The thought of a moving body is but a mode of consciousness. The whirl of a wheel gives us no evidence that it, too, is a mode of consciousness. We can truly picture with some approach to accuracy the ideas of other minds. Why? Because their ideas and ours are both of a kind — they are both ideas. We cannot so picture the actual state of that external reality which produces in us the sensation of a revolving wheel. A sharp knife will produce the sensation of pain. Have we any reason for believing that the pain thus produced was part of the knife-blade, that got into us from it? A flea moving over our backs will give an itching sensation. Does the sensation, "itch," escape from the feet of the flea and enter the back? A gentle touch of the ribs by mischievous finger-tips will produce the sensation of tickle. Is the "tickle" first in the finger-tips and then in the ribs? An electric induction-coil produces a sensation of shock. Is the shock first in the coil and then in the person shocked? Our judgments demand that these questions be answered in the negative. Whatever stimulates the nerve-centres susceptible of itching, pain, or tickle, will give us these sensations; and the stimulating thing need in no sense resemble the sensation produced.

Now, it is precisely so with the nerve-centre which apprehends motion. Whatever stimulates it, makes motion visible to our senses. The poisonous ptomaines of the blood in the delirium of fever produce just such stimulation. Drugs can do the same. An undigested supper will make us see bodies in motion, or believe we move ourselves, in dreams. As the fingers tickle the ribs, so drugs and poisons tickle the brain into seeing moving bodies. They evoke the sensations of space and motion. The space and motion I am conscious of in a dream is, so far as my sensations are con-

cerned, the same space and motion of my normal, waking moments. Surely you will not assert that the dream-space and dream-motion, and a badly digested supper that tickled it into being, are identical? If a dose of rich pie-crust can make the sensations of space and motion appear in consciousness, what evidence have we that the actual things in themselves, that encompass us within Nature, are any more like these sensations than the pie-crust is? If alcohol in excess can tickle our nerve-centres into seeing moving snakes, how do we know that the real snakes are not as unlike these sensations which they produce as the alcohol is? We can believe that our sensations of space and motion, and the things normally causing them to appear, are just alike. We can also, if we wish, believe that mischievous fingers contain the tickle that enters the ribs. Our belief one way or the other cannot alter the facts. This much we can know — that the proof in the case of the tickle is just as strong as in the case of space and motion. He who perversely asserts that the finger-tips first contain the tickle that is given up to the ribs, that the flea's feet hold the itchiness that is given up to the back, and that the knife-edge has the pain that enters the cut, is just as rational as those who declare that the outer realities of being resemble the space and motion sensations produced in us by their stimulations. He who asserts that the substances which stimulate the nerve-centres of space and motion, producing a delirium of these sensations, is like the sensations themselves, has as much proof as he who holds that anything we see is in any known way like the realities of absolute being. Do whiskey-molecules shape themselves into wriggling snakes when they enter the brain? Do Indian hemp and morphine, on entering the brain, assume the forms of space, time, and actual world-objects? Surely no one will hold to a notion so crude. Yet it is not one whit cruder than the current notions of men who believe that the Absolute Reality, external to consciousness, can in its real nature in any sense ever be known.

The logic in both instances is positively identical. Space and time, matter and motion, as known to us, are only states of our own consciousness, which the actual conditions of being tickle into perception. Whatever outer reality answers to space, stirs up that feeling in us. Whatever outer reality answers to motion creates in us that feeling. Whatever outer reality answers to matter induces that feeling. The outer reality bears the same relation to our conception of space, motion, and matter, as the fingers, fleas' feet and knife-blade do to the tickle, itchiness and pain. A picture in perspective (illustrated by stereopticon views) will stir up in the proper nerve-centres a sensation of depth or distance in space, although we know it

is not the same as the outer reality that usually stirs up the same feeling. We know it is on a flat surface. A stereoscope will make the sensation more intense. A rotating Geissler-tube, when illuminated, may be made to induce the sensation of right-hand motion when really rotating toward the left, or of left-hand motion when whirling toward the right, or of no motion at all, when, relative to other senses, it is in rapid motion. On a rail-road-train we have all observed how our motion-centres have been agitated into a belief that we are moving, when it is another train that moves, and not ours. As space and motion are but forms of our own consciousness, having some answering correspondence out of the consciousness that produces them, so the tastes and odors, as well as the colors and forms, of objects, are in the same condition of relativity. If I look at a grain of sand through a magnifying glass, I observe that what I see is magnified; but the grain itself does not change its size. If what I see is made larger, but the thing itself is not made larger, the conclusion is inevitable that I do not see the thing itself. This is no trickery of logic, but unchallengeable reason. With crossed fingers I feel one marble as two. I do not actually feel two marbles, but two sensations proceeding from one. If what I feel is doubled, and the thing itself not doubled, I do not feel the thing itself.

The relativity of all these properties appears plain after a few such considerations as the following: Dissolve a small quantity of tartaric acid in a large amount of water, until it is just slightly sour. Let one gentleman swallow some very sour solution slowly, and another one a very sweet one. Now let both taste the dilute acid. No. 1 will declare it positively sweet, and No. 2, annoyingly sour. The thing itself is surely not both sweet and sour at the same time. Put your right hand into hot water for a while, and your left into cold. Now withdraw both and insert them into a single pail containing tepid water. To the right hand it will be cold, and to the left hot. Surely that water is not both hot and cold at the same instant. Let two persons stare, the one at a very red object and the other at a bright green one; then let them simultaneously look at a light pink object. The man who stared at the green will be sure it is bright red, and the man who stared at the red will be equally sure it is bright green. (Illustrated on the screen, by the stereopticon.) Is it both red and green at the same time?

The fact revealed by all these experiments is that sensations are states of the conscious-being, and that we have no reason for assuming that things in themselves are like the sensations they produce.

Robert. G. Eccles.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF NATURE.

WHERE is the house ye will build me?
Where find me a place of rest?
I will seek out the meek and lowly,
And dwell in the contrite breast.

There I will rear me a temple,
Far, far from the busy mart;
Will live and walk with my people,
And gladden the humble heart.

Then will Life's river, ideal,
Flow to the uttermost bound;
The kingdom of heaven be real,
The song of salvation resound.

Forever the story repeating,
All creatures will voice my praise,
Telling, in songs of thanksgiving,
The height and depth of my grace.

The heavens cannot contain me,
Nor the heaven of heavens give rest;
O Man! my first-born, my loved one,
Make me thy welcome guest!

J. A. HARMON.

CONCERNING CHRISTMAS.

ANOTHER Christmas festival, "commemorating the birth of the Christ in Bethlehem of Judea," has just passed. Some have celebrated it by merriment and jollity, sports and feasts, some by joyous family gatherings, some by gifts and messages of love, peace and good-will, some by elaborate devotional exercises, and many by uniting several of these methods. It is a pleasant and joyous festival, adding one to the holidays, far too few, of the New England people, strengthening and rebinding family ties, helping those in need of material or affectional aid, and tending to the effacement of jealousies, misunderstandings and rivalries. It really operates towards the diffusion of peace and good-will among men. So weighty are these considerations, and so contagious are the feelings of happiness and good-fellowship belonging to the celebration, that, although the festival, as it is understood to-day, originated with the Roman Catholic church, the staunchest Protestants are now observing it; and Congregationalists, both Unitarian and Orthodox, did so in 1889 in greater numbers than ever before.

We hear there are two sides to every question. Is there any other side to this one? May it be held that the above sketch of the real advantages and merits of the Christmas festival is only an *ex parte* statement, and that there is a more or less counterbalancing disadvantage really connected with it?

These inquiries have been suggested to my mind by the following editorial sentence in the Christmas number of the *Christian Union*, urging systematic observance of Christmas upon Orthodox people:—

"Truism as it is to repeat that Christianity is grounded in historic facts, it reminds us that the commemoration of these facts must be for the interest of Christianity."

The editor of the *Christian Union* is also a minister of the Orthodox Congregational church. In the latter capacity he is professionally pledged to uphold the system which includes as an essential constituent the doctrine of everlasting punishment, divinely appointed for millions of men, women and children. If indeed the celebration of Christmas tends to uphold the system which includes this doctrine, we may well inquire whether the group of scriptural statements upon which the Christmas idea is founded be indeed "grounded in historic facts." Christmas observance assumes that the statements in question are true. But if they be not true — if the evidence offered in proof of them utterly fails not only of proof but of reasonableness and probability, should not this fact influence our judgment and our practice?

The Christian doctrine assumes that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and that he was also the Christ or Messiah announced by Hebrew prophets and expected by the Jewish people. Remembering that testimony is the basis of history, it is worth while to inquire how and by whom we are assured that Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

The statement that he was so born rests entirely on the assertion of two persons. One, the unknown compiler who, probably somewhere between A. D. 100 and 180, collected the traditions "according to Matthew" then current; the other the unknown compiler who, probably somewhere between A. D. 70 and 170, collected the traditions "according to Luke" then current. Apart from these two writers, there is no evidence whatever that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

I have called these two writers unknown because nobody certainly *knows* who they were. Among the many unscrupulous statements of orthodox commentators, it was formerly assumed that our gospels labeled "according to" Matthew and Luke were really written by those persons. In later years, more careful investigation, by scholars certainly as competent as the former ones, and with much better facilities for discovery of the truth, has shown the authorship of those persons to be not only unproved but exceedingly doubtful. The doubt is increased by the fact that the later researches point to a date of the public recognition of those two gospels quite incompatible with the theory that they were written by Matthew and Luke.

Nobody *knows* when they were written. All the commentators agree that the time of their first appearance is uncertain. The dates above given, representing the conclusions thought most probable by the English Davidson, the Dutch Professor Kuenen and the American Waite,* are more likely to be correct than the dates formerly assumed, because these writers worked with better advantages, and untrammeled by the creeds and traditions which bound their predecessors.

When a document is in question in our courts, the first inquiries concerning it are, Who wrote it? and When was it written? If only conjectures appear in answer to these inquiries, and especially if the conjectures materially differ from each other, the document will little avail those who produced it. Still, examination of the document may reveal such characteristics of carelessness or accuracy, of intelligence or credulity, of consistency or self-contradiction, of reasonableness or superstition in the writer, as to show whether and how far it is trustworthy, or whether, on the other hand, it is untrustworthy.

Applying this test to the two unknown writers who affirm that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, we may properly inquire, What else do they say? Are the other things which they relate manifestly true, or probable, or rationally credible?

One of these writers tells us of certain Eastern astrologers who, following a locomotive star, which indicated to them in some mysterious manner its relation to a coming King of the Jews, were led by it to Jerusalem. The star, it appears, left them to make unavailing inquiries there, until King Herod was so alarmed by the rumors regarding them as to inquire of the Jewish authorities where they expected their predicted Messiah to be born. Learning from them that Bethlehem was the predestined place, he called the astrologers and gave them that information, and then the guiding star resumed its function, and led them to the very place in Bethlehem where Mary had just brought forth her child.

That King Herod should be troubled by the announcement that a baby just born was expected by these strangers ultimately to become King of the Jews seems not very probable; but that "all Jerusalem" should be troubled with him at the same prospect is intensely improbable, since the advent of Messiah was the very thing for which they were hoping and praying. It is moreover incredible that a massacre by Herod of all the young children in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, should have taken place, as this writer affirms, without mention by Josephus, or Philo, or any other contemporaneous writer.

*History of the Christian Religion, to the year 200. By Charles B. Waite, A.M. Chicago: C. V. Waite & Co., 1881.

The compiler of the gospel "according to Matthew" also tells us, as confidently as if he knew it, what Joseph dreamed before the birth of Jesus, and what the astrologers dreamed after it; and he quietly assumes that both dreams were divinely sent to direct a certain course of conduct. Strangest of all, he affirms positively that this child of Mary was not the child of Joseph, to whom she was espoused.

The second of these unknown writers tells us that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary (who was already espoused to Joseph, of the House of David), and informed her that she was to bear a child who should be named Jesus, and to whom God would give the throne of his father David, and that he should reign over the house of Jacob forever. In reply to Mary's question, however, the angel proceeded to tell her that this child would not be the son of Joseph (and thus not of the House of David), but would be begotten by God himself. It appears that Gabriel did not recognize the incompatibility of these statements with each other.

This writer further informs us that, when the time came for Mary to be delivered, angels appeared in the night to certain shepherds in the country near Bethlehem, telling them that the Christ (that is to say that descendant of David whose reign over Israel had been predicted by the Hebrew prophets) was just born in Bethlehem. The narrative adds that the shepherds, going to Bethlehem, and finding there Mary and her husband and child, informed them that the new-born babe was the Christ.

We may well believe that Mary, connecting this statement with Gabriel's announcement that her child was to be God-begotten, "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." The strange thing is that she should have forgotten all about them when, twelve years later, "his parents," losing sight of Jesus for three days, found him in the temple. To the remonstrance of Mary, who said to Jesus, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorowing," Jesus replied, "How is is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Had Mary and Joseph known that Jesus was God-begotten, is it credible that "they understood not" this answer?

Not only is each unknown writer of the two narratives in question self-contradictory, but they also contradict each other, in regard to the infancy of Jesus. The former says that, immediately after the departure of the Eastern astrologers, his parents carried him from Bethlehem to Egypt, whence after a time he was brought back to Nazareth before going to Jerusalem. The latter says that after spending forty-one days in Bethlehem (eight for the circumcision and thirty-three for the purification), they carried him to Jerusalem and then returned to Nazareth.

The visit of the Eastern astrologers to the new-born child, told by the former of the unknown writers, seems to have taken place just about the time of the visit of the shepherds, told by the latter. But there is no account of a meeting of these two parties, and neither writer seems to be aware of the statement made by the other.

The writer of the former narrative shows, throughout, a strong desire to identify Jesus with the Christ of Old Testament prediction, and makes frequent quotations from Hebrew scripture in the attempt to prove this point. But his quotations are often erroneous, often altogether beside the mark, and always incompetent to prove the desired identity.

If you ask any one for scriptural warrant for the celebration of Christmas, he *must* point to the two narratives above mentioned. But, in view of the uncertainty of their authorship and their date, reference to them can be no more than reference to *somebody*. Somebody has said,—indeed, two somebodies have said,—that, nineteen hundred years ago, some very remarkable events took place. To be sure, these events are intensely improbable, and the two somebodies contradict themselves and each other, and the respectable authors who are *known* to have written at that period mention no such events. It is the two somebodies only who affirm that they actually took place.

If the two narratives of which I have been speaking are understood to be collections of legends and traditions, noted down a century more or less after the period described, and by credulous and superstitious persons who had no idea of what constitutes credible testimony, they are intelligible, natural, well worthy of consideration, and even instructive, when the errors belonging to the time and place are recognized and allowed for. But to class them as history, or as testimony competent to prove the matters of which they speak, is to disregard all that modern research and experience have taught respecting the qualities needful to make history or other testimony credible.

We now know that Gabriel was mistaken if he said that Jesus should sit on the throne of David, and rule over the house of Jacob. Not only did he never rule over the Jews at all, but he refused to be made their king when that was proposed to him; and he even said to one who urged him to decide authoritatively in a particular case,—"Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" If Gabriel's statement was correct, God had made his begotten son Jesus ruler over the whole Jewish nation.

We now know that the angels who appeared to the shepherds were mistaken if they said that the Jesus just born was the Christ who was to deliver the Jews from all oppres-

sors, collect them all in Palestine, and rule over them there as David did. At that time, this was the only meaning of the term "Christ." But Jesus accepted no such office and discharged no such function.

We now see, not only that the Hebrew prophecies called Messianic have failed of fulfillment after twenty-five hundred years, but that not one of them was uttered with intended reference to the coming of such a person as Jesus. We see that, whenever Jesus was born, no such Christ as Isaiah and Jeremiah described has yet been born in Bethlehem of Judea or anywhere else. We see, then, that the whole group of statements upon which the celebration of Christmas is founded were, in all probability, erroneous statements. It is quite probable, however, as the editor of the *Christian Union* has said, that the custom of celebrating that festival, and so assuming the truth of those statements, will necessarily "be for the interest of Christianity,"— for that sort of Christianity, now predominant throughout Christendom, which includes the doctrine of an everlasting hell.

The original meaning of the epithet "Christ," and its only meaning in the time of Jesus, was, Anointed ruler of the Jews, descended from David, sitting on his throne, and not only delivering his people from oppression but making them supreme among nations. The meaning of the epithet, as now used among Christians, is, a God-begotten man named Jesus, whose death on the cross was indispensable for the redemption of men;— of so many men as should accept this crucified one as their Redeemer from the hell to which God had doomed all mankind.

Belief in the reality of hell, and of a God unjust and cruel and revengeful enough to have appointed and prepared it, are indispensable conditions precedent to belief in Jesus as a Redeemer. Had there been no hell, no redeeming Christ would have been necessary. The latter belief inevitably involves the former. And both together inevitably involve the degrading conception of a God cruel enough to create beings, to vast numbers of whom existence eternally prolonged would be a curse instead of a blessing.

That God should render to every man according to his works is not only reasonable and just, but it is God's imperative duty. If, however, He be a God of love, as Jesus said, this retribution, however temporarily painful to the transgressor, must tend to his reformation, and thus to his ultimate benefit. The idea that God has appointed and prepared a state of being in which neither repentance nor reformation will await the sinner, is the worst of libels upon the Creator. But this atrocious misrepresentation of God is the necessary accompaniment of belief in a redeeming

Christ; and the observance of a miraculous birth of the Christ necessarily tends to uphold and perpetuate that misrepresentation.

It remains for each person to consider whether systematic maintenance, on religious grounds, of such a group of false pretences is desirable or undesirable; is likely, on the whole, to do good or harm.

CHAS. K. WHIPPLE.

GOOD WITHOUT GOD.

How CAN there be any morality without religion? How can one be good without belief in a supreme being and emotions of fear or love towards him? This is the most important question that confronts the Rationalist, and upon the answer depends the acceptance or rejection of "free-thought" by the masses; for it is not the true but the apparently useful that attracts men. The Christian lady who said, "I like my religion and I would believe it even if I knew it wasn't true," expressed an absurdity which few would dare to avow, but which multitudes act upon. The same attitude of mind was evidenced by the man who said, "I never allow myself to read anything that would disturb my simple faith." It is what is agreeable rather than what is verified that secures adhesion. Before Rationalism can gain acceptance beyond the limited circle of logical thinkers it must demonstrate its utility and pleasantness. It has long stood on the defensive, and with many apologies and explanations has labored to prove that it is not as bad in its results as is charged by its opponents; but the time has come for it to be aggressive, and not only to declare that men can be good without God, but to boldly maintain that no one can be truly good who believes in God.

What is it to be good? Is it to renounce the world, fast, pray, do penance, meditate on holy things? Is it to be charitable, giving away a little of the millions gained by commercial usages of doubtful morality? Is it to be a pillar of the church, an expounder at prayer-meetings, a promoter of benevolent societies? Is it to keep the "ten commandments" and conform to all the moral requirements of church and society? Reference to the dictionary shows forty definitions of the word good; but the primary sense is said to be — strong. Its most general usage is perhaps in the sense of useful or suitable, and the noun is defined as "that which creates happiness." Spencer regards good as meaning adaptability to an end. To be good, one must be just and kind, and to do good one must act for the gen-

eral advantage. The good man is he who by his conduct adds to the happiness of mankind. The standard of good in the past has been what was supposed to be the revealed will of God,—which we now know to be merely the opinions of the ancients as to what constituted goodness. They personified these attributes in Yahweh, and put into his mouth their own conceptions of right conduct. The world has gained better ideas of what is good, but Christians make the mistake of still demanding respect for this creation of a God by the ancient Hebrew mind. Good has advanced, but their God has remained stationary; and he, who conforms his conduct to the pattern of the Bible God, accepts the morality of two thousand or more years ago as his guide.

Morality changes from age to age with the opinion of society as to what usages are most beneficial. With regard to marriage, polyandry, polygamy, promiscuity and monogamy are at varied times accounted moral. Concerning dress, degrees of clothing from the fig-leaf to the complete covering serve the ideas of morality in different lands. Christians conceal the ankle and bare the bosom, while Mohammedans cover the face and display the feet. Slavery, feudalism, wages, co-operation express prevailing ideas of what was right industrially during the past. We see, in every direction, that there is no fixed standard of moral usage, but that the experience of society determines what is considered useful and this becomes the current morality. But one element runs through all varied usage, and constitutes the essence of morality,—it is good-will to man. He who keeps this sentiment supreme is good, but he whose aspiration is the glory of an imagined deity in the skies may be good or bad in his conduct, and his motive is a lower one than that of the man who lives for his fellow-man. Man is the highest development of nature of which we possess any knowledge, and any attention lavished upon fancied intelligences superior to man is wasted.

It is clear that the Hebrew and Christian God represents an obsolete standard of good. The worship of "the God of Battles," and of the "Heavenly Father" who damns his children, can only degrade the worshiper. It is apparent that one cannot be truly good who believes in the Bible God. But we may assert that belief in any God produces a lower type of morality than that attained to by the pure Rationalist. A well established teaching of Evolution is that development repeats descent. The unfolding of the embryo shows the growth of the race. So the development of the mind of the individual may be considered to prove the manner in which society has grown. Experience shows that in early childhood the most potent influence is fear; in youth it is authority; in manhood it is reason. The

child is governed by dread of consequences, the youth is controlled by respect or love for those who command, and the adult acts as reasonable judgment dictates. Observation of races of men shows the same distinction according to the grade of civilization; and an examination of religions gives evidence of these distinctive motives of control corresponding to the culture of the devotee. The savage heathen and the ignorant Christian are in the mental condition of childhood; fear of evil spirits and of hell control their conduct. The advanced Christian is influenced by the authority of the church, or of what he is told is God's Word. Respect for the priest or minister, and love for God, determine his action. He is in the youthful stage of mental development. The Rationalist considers the effect of his action upon himself and others, and has become a mental adult. It is certainly the highest stage of development, and bears witness to the justice of the claim that the Rationalist is the only truly moral man. Three boys are asked to drink liquor. They refuse; one because his father would beat him; the second because he loves his mother, who has forbidden it; the third because he has studied the effects of drinking and believes it to be evil. The first is a heathen, the second a Christian, the third a Rationalist. He who does right because it is right is a higher man than he who acts from love of God or from fear of the devil.

But, if we do not recognize the authority of church or Bible, it may be asked, what rules can we find to guide us in determining what is right conduct? The ethical writings of mankind through all ages have recognized one foundation principle for moral conduct. It is expressed by the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," "Do as you would be done by," or as expressed by Confucius in one word, Reciprocity. This, when acted upon intelligently, in the sense of doing as you ought to wish others to do, affords the best guide that the mind of man has yet formulated. An expression of the same sentiment in negative form, which from its condensation of value may be termed the Diamond Rule, is, Do no harm! This covers all the "shalt nots" of Moses and the prophets, and furnishes a prohibitive guide of unfailing certitude. The exercise of these rules depends upon education, and it is only the instructed conscience that will apply them to the best advantage. This is natural morality, and it is destined to modify and reform Christian morality.

Let us see how it applies to the "laws of Moses." That reform is most in harmony with natural methods which, instead of destroying, improves upon existing forms. So (1) in reforming the first commandment we would do it by the addition of one letter, and let it read, Thou shalt have

no other gods before me*n*. Man is to be recognized as the supreme object of concern and devotion. This is the first and great commandment of natural morality, and, until man is recognized as the supreme being, he will remain the mental and physical slave of those who usurp authority in the name of God. (2) Graven images of anything that is beautiful may be made and admired without reference to Moses or Comstock, for nothing that nature has fashioned is impure. (3) A well-bred man will take neither the name of God nor George nor Gosh in vain, for profanity implies passion and is a way of expressing emotion without intellectual exercise. But it is merely an offence against good taste. (4) Natural morality protests against a compulsory Christian sabbath observance. While insisting on the preservation of a weekly rest-day it demands varied diversion and true recreation for the toiler, and would open every means of travel, instruction and entertainment on his day of leisure, and would require that those who work on that day should have another period for their rest and recreation. (5) Honor to parents should depend on the parents' deserts. The mere fact of parentage is not alone a sufficient claim for consideration and must be supported by moral worth. The edict of natural morality is, "Honor to whom honor is due." (6) Society has found that it is best not to kill, and will in time cease to kill murderers and foreign soldiers, as it learns to respect human life; and possibly its regard will extend to animal life. (7) Natural morality strongly opposes Christian morality in questions concerning sex relations. It denies any inherent evil in any natural appetite. It resents the social injustice of condemning a woman for what it condones in a man. It asserts that the morality of an act is not dependent on the sanction of a minister or a magistrate, but upon utility. It demands freedom of divorce by mutual consent wherever no harm is done to either of the parties or to children. (8) Stealing in all its forms is reprobated. Not only the robber and defaulter are condemned, but also the profit-monger, the monopolist, the exempted church, the wage oppressor, and all who make gain out of the necessities of mankind by selling productions at prices beyond their cost. When the voice of natural morality is heeded, the present corrupt system of trade will be abolished, and give place to universal co-operation. (9) The advantage of truthfulness is too apparent to need any "divine" enforcement, and (10) the evils of covetousness are so vast and ever-present as to preach their own condemnation. But the new tenth commandment will not include wives with houses and oxen or "anything that is his." Woman will no longer be regarded as property, and her equal rights will be respected.

How is this morality to be promoted without enforcement by "divine" threats? We answer,—by prosperity and education; prosperity that will remove much of the inducement to crime, and education that will show that true self-interest and morality are inseparable. The prescription of Confucius, "Make them well-off, then instruct them," is the panacea for immorality. People are to be made well-off, by the abolition of competition for gain and the substitution of a system that will secure a good living to every worker. Education must cease to be instruction in dead languages and dying religions, and must consist in knowledge of nature and capability to supply human needs.

But, with all this, many feel that they must have the impelling force of fervor for God and the stimulus of religious faith. We have constant evidence that man has outgrown the need of these mystical influences, and has developed a desire for usefulness and a love for the fellow-man that furnish all needed incitement to effort. The news of famine, flood, pestilence, any disaster whatever, calls forth spontaneous aid for the sufferers. The joy over rescue is not confined to friends or relatives, but the brotherhood of man is realized whenever a member of the human family escapes from danger. One who, as recently, saw an audience of three thousand people arise and cheer when the arrival of an overdue steamship with twelve hundred passengers was announced, realized that the love of God was fully replaced by the Enthusiasm for Humanity. Man has risen above brutal selfishness; and when its exercise is not essential to existence, because society will have adopted associated labor as the method of supplying needs, love to man will be the supreme emotion; all the gods will be discarded as bad, and without God man will be good.

Robert C. Adams.

EXTRACTS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED ESSAY ON IMMORTALITY.

IV.

If death were only death; if in that sleep no dreams would come; if theology, planting itself upon the religious sentiment, had not built its palaces of heaven, ringing with the ceaseless adoration of blessed souls, and, right beneath them, sunk its dismal vaults of hell, reverberating with the wails and curses of the damned,—men might have learned to accommodate themselves to an incident of such ancient usage, so much a part of the scheme of Nature, as individ-

ual death. But we cannot blame theology, when we remind ourselves of its excellent intentions. It was all done in the interest of righteousness.

> "The fear of hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order";

and, in the prevalence and insolence of wickedness, we are ready to say of such punishment, as Orsino said of music: "Give them excess of it!"

It is easy to see where these beliefs came from. The universal instinct of life, as I have been endeavoring to show, gave man his idea of everlasting life. The awakening of his conscience gave this dream of immortality its moral phase, and this picture of hell. The earlier instinct, before it became moral, naturally shaped for him the conception, not only of a continued life, but of a life which, like all future life to the child-heart of man, is full of the augury of hope. We consent to go forward from the present to the next moment, to possess ourselves of the good which we believe it has in store for us. The eschatology of the American Indian represents this stage of religious evolution,—who believed in a happy hunting-ground for all his tribe,

> "And thinks, exalted to his equal side,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company."

But later, when more highly endowed races had developed a moral sense, under the promptings of which they began to approve or blame their own conduct as good or evil, the idea of an expiating fire-punishment began to take form in their imaginations, and at last established its place among their settled convictions.

Heaven and hell are not localities like the Arctic ocean, or the planet Saturn, to be found somewhere in the physical world, in the spiritual world, in any world; they are ideals of the human soul. They are not facts in the career of man or in the scheme of Nature; they are purely facts of spiritual experience, and this solution will come to be accepted, at last, as an answer to those who falsely accept and falsely deny their actuality.

It is curious to note that the acknowledged great poem of the modern ages is Dante's *Divina Comedia*,—a picture of Heaven, Purgatory and Hell, the latter being the principal and central scene. If Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, with their delineations of the earthly life of men, of that life's successes and defeats, its joys and sorrows,—a life shared by the deathless gods,—was the ancient ideal, Dante's grand funeral oratorio, prolonged in the sonorous and solemn music of Milton, is indicative of the dominance

of conscience among the more serious, more nobly endowed, world-conquering races of Christendom.

V.

Closely studied, this mainspring, this instinctual force that keeps us eager to live, seems to be balanced by counteracting forces, that check its extravagances. Do we really have at all times that relish for life which this feeling generates? Is it true, as Tennyson sings, that

> "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Has ever truly longed for death;
>
> "'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
> O, Life, not death, for which we pant,
> More life, and fuller, that we want"?

Or is this but one voice of our restless human nature? The other voice, too, has its *innings*, and for a time steeps all the heart in an utter weariness and longing for rest and peace. Bitterly Tithonus, who had thoughtlessly asked and been granted the boon of immortality, laments,—

> "Me only, cruel immortality
> Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
> Here at the quiet limit of the world."

Then, too, the actual estimate we put upon the quality of our life, as it averages to us, shows how we are cheated by our instincts. How rarely does the fruition of it realize the extravagant promises with which it had been puffed and cried up, when it was offered. What is that vivacious boy of twelve, jocund with the exhilirating blood his strong young heart is pumping into his veins, doing? Just at this moment, what are his mental processes? We know well; for we remember. With all the eagerness of his heart, he is wishing to be a man — wishing to be twenty-one. Rake and spendthrift that he is of sweet experiences which he will always remember but never repossess, he is throwing away with contempt the present golden moments, while he compensates the disappointment they bring him by telling himself: Oh, but just you wait till Saturday afternoon, till Christmas, till Fourth of July, till vacation, and see what solid chunks of satisfaction I will have for these poor husks of *now!*

Nor do we unlearn when we are thirty, nor yet when we are fifty, this habit of discounting the unsatisfactory present — for the promise of some future accruing good. Away, we say, with this empty *now;* bring on the experience of next week, of next year. When Summer comes, when my ship comes in, when my dividends begin, after the election, when my son is born, when he becomes a man and honor is

conferred upon him,—then life will first be worth having. Our life is but a succession of *nows;* yet all our nows, when we had them, when they were neither anticipations nor memories, had for us no poetry, no romance, no satisfaction. How many hours of a long life would all the *nows*, put together, make, which were so sweet and compensative that we would gladly have had them stay forever?

What do those manifestations of the universal unrest, expressed in our literature and in our common forms of speech, and graven into the serious expression of our faces, indicate, if not that we have no passion for life such as it is in our actual experience, but are all the time beckoned on by siren illusions, that tell us there is something just about to happen which will give us the fruition of our hopes? They beckoned us from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood. Perhaps it is only that small minority of us who are given the solace of age to round out our experience and harmonize our characters, who learn at last to leave off living by anticipation, and get some just appreciation of the moderate satisfaction that can be gotten out of our present thought and feelings.

VI.

It takes some experience to reconcile us even to sleep, genial and sanitary as it is. In extreme infancy Nature does not leave it to our choice. She overpowers us, and binds us in slumber by some pleasant strategy, before we know what she is about. Later on, when the process requires for its initiation some concurrence of our wills, the child, exulting in the joy of his existence, refuses to yield it. He protests against going away from the light and sound of the living world, to silence and darkness. He cries and fights: sometimes with foot and fist. It is as formidable a sacrifice for him to give up his playthings, and in his cradle "lie in cold obstruction," as for the mature man to die.

> "For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> This pleasing, anxious being ere resigned;
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

Yet we soon learn that sleep is good, and go to our beds without crying or protest. Will not the man-child come some day, in his mature reason, to see that the longer sleep, that arrests for him the child's-play of life, adapts itself as well to the deeper needs of that Nature of which he is a part?

We enjoy our social meal, when to the gratification of healthy appetite is added the delight of social converse;

but, after we have sat an hour at the table, it does not sadden us that we must rise and leave it. We go with eager expectation to the theatre and to the concert; but after we have, for two hours, had our susceptibilities thrilled by melodies and harmonies, or stirred by lofty sentiments dramatically represented, we tire of the excess of such exquisite entertainment, and push more eagerly out of the thronged exit than we pushed in. The proud cavalcade of trained horses has gone through its mazy evolutions in the ring, the acrobats have performed all their feats of strength and agility, and the striped clowns have recited all their new and old jests. Pull down the booth; let the music cease, for the show is done. The fact is, our natures and their capacities are finite, and, like all finite creatures, we belong to a world of change. Nothing is good long. Men think they were not born to die, but give them a taste of immortality, and such an intolerable *ennui* would possess them, they would find themselves so out of joint with their environing conditions, that, like old Tithonus, they would beg of the gods the boon of congenial death.

When a man has done his work, when he has had all the great experiences of life, when he has tasted temperately its great joys, and borne patiently some of its great sorrows; when he has tested the limits of his powers, and learned that beyond a certain range achievement is impossible; when he has grown weary of the monotonous round of thoughts that brought no certain knowledge,—even if his body be not full of pains nor his mind full of regrets, why should he look with sorrow or alarm at the gentle messenger stealing quietly upon him to summon him to his rest? And you, nearest friend, who honored and loved, perhaps sorely needed him, come near, and, before you draw the white face-cloth over the white face, study its expression. Could there be anything more utter and complete than its satisfaction? Is there in it one trace of suffering, of regret, of desire? Does he look cowed by the shame of the great defeat in which he has just been overcome? Seems he to envy you your life, or any life? And if you could, would you dare break the calmness of his rest by one flicker of consciousness, one thrill of feeling, one impulse of desire, one filament of memory to connect the great ocean of his peace with the far-away-sounding murmur of the streamlet which was his earthly life? Would you confront God himself, the solemn spectacle of whose work lay before you, and say that life, any life you had known in experience or history, or could shape in imagination, were better than the sleep *He had given his beloved?*

Is it not enough, to be assured that, after all the worst it

can do, death is only the worker of beneficent change? It never reaches the heart of life. Life always evades the malign stroke of death, and in some new and higher form laughs at his impotent rage. More leaves green the branches of the oak and elm, under the warm skies of June, than the previous October gales tore off and scattered on the frozen ground. More and happier birds come back, in Summer, and not a note is lacking in the chorus they are singing in the blossoming orchard. Nobler races succeed ours, to perfect and surpass our highest achievements; wiser and stronger men come after us, to finish the tasks we fainted under. I know how self-hood,—the irrepressible animal within us,—raises its brute uproar to drown all the harmony of the spheres; but why should we give it any heed? "There is," it bellows, "no joy, no good, no life, no God save as these stand in relation to my consciousness —a universe outside of my cognizance of it is a ghastly phantom. I make it a *sine qua non* of the vital forces of living Nature that they must respect and conform themselves to my identity."

This is *cogito, ergo sum* run into the ground. How can I question that my *Ego* is eternal, since it is doubtful, in the modern scheme of metaphysics, if any thing but my ego exists now? The cosmos—all matter—what are they? Only a picture on my retina. Perhaps I painted them myself. Motion, force,—it is but a sensation of my brain, perhaps self-generated. There are no other creatures, no other men even; the shapes that masquerade as such are but the result of the shaking of the kaleidoscope in my censorium. And God? Oh, God is my idea. The first scripture of this philosophy thus reads: *In the beginning Ego created God—the heavens and the earth.*

VII.

Once the mild Olympian gods, wearied with the complaints of mortals, agreed that if men would agree as to what kind of immortality they wanted, their prayers for it should be granted. So the deities came together and listened in placid silence to the petitions of the assembled human race. They all professed that their hearts were set on another chance of life; but some wanted to be taller, some to be shorter, some fatter, others leaner. Some did not fancy red hair, others objected to being bald. This one would have left out of his make-up a hunch-back, and that one a withered hand. The more sensible mortals derided these trivial complaints, and pushed the grumblers to the rear with derisive groans, so that space might be left for them to display their more decorous grievances. Some complained of weak memories, others of mathemat-

ical incapacity; some bemoaned their defective imagination; others their inability to apprehend an argument, and still others that their musical endowments were so limited that they could never distinguish the Hymn to Zeus from their national war-ode. Another section of the human crowd at last got a chance to present their cases, and seemed just as dissatisfied with their moral characteristics, but were so ashamed to speak of them that they did so mostly in whispers behind their hollowed hands, in the private ear of some one of the gods. Some acknowledged that they had always had a violent temper which they could not control; others that pride had been the bane of their happiness, and others that they had crawled through life, their very existence weighted and depressed with despondency; many actually stipulated that they would rather not live again than live tormented with the envy and jealousy that had always spoiled their earthly peace; and a large crowd disclosed with shame that a hungry sensuality had degraded their pleasures, and tarnished the purity of their souls.

"I see, I see how it is," at last said Jove, breaking up the conference; "these improved monkeys all think they want to live again, and to be themselves, but they really — every one of them — want to be somebody else. To us they all seem nearly alike; and it is only by the very traits which they now disown, and wish to leave behind, that they are distinguishable from one another. I think that, without consulting their wishes, we shall be able to provide a fate for them, not only better for the universe, but better for them, than their prayers have been able to shape."

Geo. F. Talbot.

DEITY, OMNIPRESENT AND OMNIPOTENT.

Matter, we are told, consists of sixty-four elements. Some of these elements may prove to be not elements, but compounds. Possibly the time will come, as some chemists believe, when matter will be known to consist of one element.

It is maintained that matter fills all known space; that even between the atoms which constitute a molecule — those infinitesimal spaces — matter, however ethereal, must exist; else those atoms could not act upon each other. So between the stars, or suns, of the universe, matter exists in a very subtile form; else those bodies could not act upon each other.

Light cannot pass through space where no matter is. And if matter exists in all space so far as it is possible to

investigate, that furnishes reasonable ground for *faith* that it exists in *all* space. If all known birds are bipeds, it is reasonable to believe that all birds are bipeds, though we do not know that they are.

Matter cannot be annihilated, nor created, by any known power. There is, then, substantial evidence, producing a reasonable faith, that matter is eternal and omnipresent. But wherever matter is, there force is found, whether it be in an atom or a sun. The elementary forces are gravitation, chemical affinity, cohesion, adhesion, motion, light, heat, electricity, and magnetism; and it is maintained that these are convertible, the one into the other, so that forces are really one force. The doctrine of the conservation of force is, that no force can be destroyed, nor created. Force, then, is eternal, and omnipresent. Force is immaterial, or spirit, and pervades all matter, as matter pervades all space.

This all-force may very properly be called the Almighty, — a word generally used by the author of the book of Job for deity.

What is this Force or Spirit? None can tell. As in Job, "Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" A fragment in Genesis makes the Almighty say, "I am that I am," or, in other words, Being, or Existence, was all the author of that fragment would assert concerning the nature of the Almighty. He and the unknown but able author of Job were, like Paul, agnostic in part: "we know in part."

But we may say of this Almighty, that, "In him we live and move and have our being." "He dwelleth not [exclusively] in temples made with hands," . . . "for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him."

How vastly larger is this kind of theism than the theological notion of a big man-shaped God, "sitting outside of the universe seeing it go"! Theology knows the man-shaped God — excluded by it from the universe which he had made out of nothing — so well that, in its still-existing mediæval art at least, it could fit him with hat and clothing complete. And it speaks to him, still, in invocation, with a familiarity which I do not use with my next-door neighbor, bidding him do this, that, and the other thing, as I might a well-paid errand-boy. Such theological irreverence comports well with the contracted idea of the Almighty, by theology long defended; but accords very ill with the idea of the boundless, the infinite, the real Almighty.

It will be asked, perhaps, "Has the All-force of the universe intelligence?" If by intelligence we mean some small thing, measured by a corresponding something in man, I would dare to answer, No. If we mean, however,

some capacity without which deity could not accomplish what it does accomplish, I must answer, Yes. With or without what we *call* "intelligence," the world is; and the universal Power, we know, accomplishes all that we see in the universe, and vastly more. We may *trust*, then, either way.

Remembering, we say, is an act of intelligence. It is the recalling of what was temporarily out of mind. Does the Almighty recall what was temporarily out of his mind? If he does, he has to do so by intellect. Reasoning is an act of the intellect, in which we proceed from what we know to attain what we do not know. Does the Almighty proceed by inference from what he knows to what he does not know? By imagination we picture what is absent from us. Does the Almighty picture what is absent from him? Let us not contract our ideas of the Infinite. They are small enough at best; and we are irreverent enough at best.

"But shall we worship the Almighty? I do not care to worship force." So some will say. If by worship we mean, for example, kneeling and telling the Almighty to his face how good, or great, or powerful he is, I should say that such action would please an average politician better than it would the Almighty. If, however, by worship we mean the experiencing of the emotions of awe, reverence and delight which come over us when we behold in Nature the manifestations of the Infinite Power, then we should worship. Said Jesus, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship." He was referring to two temples, one at the Samaritan Gerizim, the other at the Jewish capital. "God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

One day, I visited a palatial residence on a rise of ground overlooking a beautiful city. There were the spacious grounds, set with lovely trees, with gorgeous flowers everywhere blooming. At the left lay a charming lake, with lovely lilies on its bosom, and with weeping-willows bending over to admire its shining face. The taller trees photographed themselves in its waters. There were the pine and the Norway spruce, and varieties of birch. At the right was an elevated open space. In the center was the mansion, the home of motherhood, of the babe, and of old age. And in the background was a forest of maples. Overhead was a blue sky,—never one more lovely,—and in the West the setting sun, before sinking finally to sleep, was painting all most wonderfully. Gradually longer became the shadows towards the East. While I gazed upon that sight, a strange emotion came over me. As tears began to blind my vision, something

almost drew me to my knees, in the mingled feelings of wonder and delight. I call it "worship in spirit."

And so I believe in the Almighty, and in worship.

From eternal Power, or Spirit, the power or spirit which unites atoms was derived. From eternal Power, or Spirit, the power or spirit which organizes matter into plants, animals and man was derived. There was no other possible origin of them,—just as there was no other possible origin of the bodies of plants, animals and men than eternal matter.

So with Paul we may quote the Greek poet Aratus, and say, "We are his offspring." And our faith has solid and eternal foundations. PERRY MARSHALL.

CHRISTIANITY AND FORGIVENESS.*

CONCERNING any doctrine or opinion, the first question that should be asked is, not *Is it comforting?* but, *Is it true?*

In these days of economic restlessness, these days of new social expectation and hope, one almost feels that to stop an hour, in a Sunday lecture, to ponder matters of a simply *speculative* religious or ethical nature, is a waste of valuable time not only, but an action even morally culpable. The world waits for *practical* ideas, and listens to practical men. *Or should do so.* Alas that too often, in flocks, it still runs after the false prophets of "theology," and give heed to the vain illusions of an unscientific "faith"! And while this latter fact remains true, it is our duty, as men and women earnest for light and freedom and for a higher moral insight and life among the masses of our fellows, to give voice as often as we may,—perhaps much oftener than we do,—to ideas of religion and morality more rational, more helpful—because nearer true—than those commonly in vogue. The work of "Liberalism," and of the propagation of "Free Religion," is yet far from ended in the world.

Thus my topic, this afternoon, is "Christianity and Forgiveness." And the topic was suggested during the past week, by two items in two different papers,—the two taken together manifesting how little real effect modern scientific enlightenment and the efforts of rational thinkers have yet had upon the obstinate upholders of child-world superstitions; and directly proving, moreover, if we need proof, the wisdom of every little band of Liberal workers, and of the publishers of every Liberal periodical, who bravely still, in

* An Address before the Free Religious Society of Providence, R. I., Sunday, Jan. 12, 1890.

the midst of discouragement and of much popular disdain, say, "Our Voice must not die out; the need of our emphatic protest was never more urgently apparent."

One of the two newspaper items to which I refer is as follows, clipped from the columns of the latest issue of *The Presbyterian Journal*, of Philadelphia:

WITHOUT HIM YOU CAN DO NOTHING.

A little boy said: "How hard it is to do right! I've tried and tried, and there's no use trying any longer."

But one day, after reading his Bible, he said: "Why, I've been trying to change myself all the time, and here I read that only God can change me. I can no more change my heart than a colored man can make himself white. How foolish I have been not to ask Him!"

And he was right. Are you trying to change your own heart? *You can never do it.* It will get worse and worse until you ask Jesus to give you a new heart.

Now, follow this with that account, which perhaps you all saw, of the recent legal execution of three or four murderers, comment on certain features of which, for the sake of illustration, and from an approving religious standpoint, another journal has just made. "*Never too Late,*"—"*Never too Late,*"—so cries this ardent "evangelical" periodical; and continues, "Here were these hardened men, sinners in the extreme, brought, on the very gallows, to Jesus' feet, and made to cry, as they were swung off into eternity, 'Forgiven, forgiven!'"—the foul crimes done in their days of nature miraculously purged and burnt away, and they rejoicing in full assurance of instant entrance into bliss, through "the atonement of Jesus."

Put the two together, I say! "Of yourself you can do nothing"; — that first; and secondly, No matter what your crimes, your awful shames, your sins against nature and against your fellows,—in an instant, through a "religious" formula, "*forgiven, forgiven!*" This in the month of January, opening month of a New Year of Reason,—the year the first in the closing decade of a century of material science and moral insight such as the world never before knew.

Truly, the work of Liberalism is not yet ended! The time is not yet ripe for Free Religion to disband. It was never more needed than now. Never more needed; for what is the work, the practical work in the world to-day, of the true Liberalism? What is it that the holders, the earnest holders, of the rational thought of these later times have in mind to do? Their aim is the uplifting of the world. The thought of the earnest Rationalist is to benefit man. It is to bring man into right relations, into true harmony, with the surrounding conditions of his life. It is to make life for all men peaceful, progressive, happy,—

in accordance with the real facts of Nature, the real animating spirit of the worlds.

Kneeling once to the Goddess of Liberty erected upon a guillotine, Madame Roland, before her execution, uttered the familiar words, which here recur to us: "O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" With the book of the world's history during Christian ages open before us, and in our mind the thought of the Christian scheme of salvation, as that scheme has generally been preached and understood, what to-day can we exclaim but in paraphrase, "O proffered Christian 'forgiveness,' what crimes have been committed with thy sanction!"

I have it in mind to refer to the New Testament parable of the "Prodigal Son,"—an admirable story for our purpose. You all are familiar with it—I need not even outline it here, particularly. What does the story signify?

There are in vogue, as all know, various methods of "Biblical interpretation." In the case of the present parable I have examined three or four "authorities," to see what would be said of it. Dr. Geike, of Edinboro', in his noted "Life of Christ," gives, as the intention of the parable, the rebuke of the cold correctness of the Pharisees, who are represented in the Elder Brother of the story, by showing the greater esteem in which God holds a warm, loving heart, even if in the breast of a sinner. Here comes in, very evidently, the human-like view of Deity,—the giving to the Eternal of "body, parts and passions," and saying, as Geikie does, "*God looks* with unspeakably *greater favor* on the penitent humility of the sinner, with its earnest of gratitude and love, than on cold correctness in which the heart has no place." The Dutch school of criticism, represented by Drs. Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, give this same interpretation, with two others added. This first application of the story, they say, is evident enough, and "certainly intended by Jesus,"—but the parable has a wider scope. Luke had in mind the relations in which heathen and Jew stood to each other and to God. Jesus condemns the contemptuous pride and exclusiveness of the Jew. The "far country" means the world of the Gentiles. And again, say these representatives of the Dutch school, both of the foregoing interpretations limit the parable unduly. The "sinner's" history is here depicted—the history of the common sinner, the sinner of all times and all nations. The parable reveals, says Dr. Hooykaas, that "the Father's love comes forth to meet and welcome the prodigal, and to restore him to the honor he had lost." Mark that last phrase—"to *restore him to the honor he had lost.*" Still again, in the "Story of Thomas Didymus," by Dr. Freeman Clarke, the parable is made to depict the con-

dition of the Gentiles, who in Jesus' time lived in a "far country" from God, but whom, on their coming to him, God would with joy receive. And also, very strongly indeed, says Dr. Clarke, the parable depicts God's love for the sinner in general, and his willingness to receive and restore, even when men are yet a great way off. Finally, Rev. Mr. Mann, lately of Rochester, who has written much for Unitarian Sunday-schools, gives this latter interpretation to the parable as its only interpretation. And certainly, whatever Jesus himself may have intended to teach by the story,—(it is needless for me to remark that, even granting that the parable originated with such a person as Jesus, the "intention" of it nobody can now know,)—the common modern Christian interpretation put upon the parable is that of Hooykaas and Clarke and Mann. "The Father's heart," says Mann, "is full of tenderness for his child; and [the italics are ours] *solicitude for the straying* seems almost to cast the *rewards of fidelity* into the shade. Heaven overflows with bounty, and seeks *undeserving objects* on which to pour its generosity." These words go well with the expression of Dr. Hooykaas, "God's love comes forth to meet and welcome the sinner, and *to restore him to the honor he had lost.*" And this is the general interpretation put to-day by Christian teachers upon the parable.

But from the point of view of modern thought,—of modern discovery and conclusion,—*the ideas inculcated by this "love and forgiveness" interpretation have no basis in fact.* None whatever. The interpretation is altogether one of emotion and sentiment;—some would say, of *weak* emotion and sentiment. I do not go quite that far. But certainly the Working Power in Nature, as we now understand that Power, is not the kind of Being the parable presupposes. Let us recognize the fact, and conform our lives to it! Let us recognize the Truth, and live by that. Too long, religion has dwelt in illusion, denying the facts of life. Too long she has held out both hopes and promises which the stern realities of the universe label False. Too long she has bolstered up both good and evil by misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the nature of things. The throbbing Spirit of the Universe, in the inclusive actuality of its Being,—in the completeness of its order and beauty and uplifting power,—of which we know but a fragment,—may indeed be infinitely more and better than any poor, weak human thought or affection can imagine. And the far-off, evolving Future may, millenniums hence, resolve all into good. But *now*, as in the past, the upholding Power has no less its other aspect. And "God" (if we use that word) is *not* "a God of love," *if we*

are to interpret the word Love in its common human acceptation, and say that it is *synonymous with Mercy and Forgiveness.* The Working Energy of the worlds is a Power of *Justice*—of Justice pure and simple. There is no weak sentimentality in Nature—not one particle. Nature is a Shylock, and *will have* her pound of flesh,—and with no Portia (under the name, Emotional Religion) to come in with staying voice. And Nature is identical with "God,"—at any rate is the garment we see God by; is thrilled through with the God-force; is the only manifestation of God we have.

It is weakness, therefore,—is it not?—to preach that "God is merciful." The Eternal is *not* merciful. It is a crime, or will some day be considered a crime, to preach that "God" ever "forgives." The Eternal *never* forgives. Law is remorseless. That is to say again, Nature is just. And that is the best we can say. And it is all that we ought to want to say. The universe is just. The nature of things is steadfast; under a given order of things, we know what will come to pass. There is nothing arbitrary in all the worlds. We have knowledge of Causation. And who, wisely considering the matter, would have things otherwise than thus?

I have called it a "crime" to preach that "God is love," that "God is merciful," in the ordinary acceptation of those words. *Why?* My meaning, I think, cannot but be apparent. My meaning is simply this: and I call upon you, friends, out of your own experience and observation to prove that what I assert is true. *Such preaching is not only false in itself, but it gives men false hopes.* The best of men it daily disappoints, and the worst of men it lures forever on, through evil and sinful courses. If they are "irreligious," it lures them on with the thought that sin, if it can be forgiven so easily, doesn't amount to much after all; with the thought that its consequences may be averted. And if they are disposed to religiousness, it lures them on in the idea that, at *any* time, they can turn about,—"be converted," as the saying goes,—and, meeting God's pardon and love, be "fully restored," as Dr. Hooykaas suggests,—"fully restored" to honor and purity and blessedness. And as we saw when we began, such preaching is still the prevalent preaching of our day. Yet such preaching is utter falsity—if unqualified. And mark once more its results: Tell a man, not necessarily directly, but even *indirectly,* that he can go on in ways of deceit and dishonesty, in ways of moral disintegration, in ways of spiritual debasement,—in even the slightest degree, to say nothing of evil carried on indiscriminately and by wholesale,—tell a man this, or have such an idea get abroad in

the air, as it is in the air and recognized as the teaching of the church, with promise of sure final escape in the "love of God," even with a little of Purgatory between-times, and how many there are — millions of them — to *jump* at such an offer! How readily the world believes the falsehood! How readily it has believed it in the past, and "jumped" — to its death or to its deformity. But the nature of things in the universe is against such thought. The worlds are kept and carried on by *law*, — revolving in their ceaseless round by law; evolving life, and whatever shall be the destiny of life, by law. The popular doctrine of Forgiveness, therefore, we must reject, and some day it will meet as popular decline as it now holds popular favor. No teaching in the world can forever prosper, or ever be anything but false, and, in the long run, disastrous, that contradicts the order of the worlds.

True, if the man who is said to have originated this parable did himself believe in a God of such love that he deemed that the Infinite and Eternal would annul even consequences, we too, in one sense, if we could, would delight to believe with him. For we cannot but deem much of the sin and shame and wilfulness and deformity of man a necessary accompaniment of his existing nature, in his present stage of development from still lower and grosser life, — a yet unabsorbed natural remainder of greater evils long since sloughed off in his progress upward, — a progress the final height of which even on earth he has by no means yet begun to dream. But we know to-day that there is no such God in the universe as the idea we have been considering implies, — a God who *can* blot out consequences. And so we do not deceive ourselves.

We know, — to speak of Causation again, — that in the world, surrounding man on every hand, are the laws of existence, — laws of mind and of morals as well as of the body, — laws which are *the expression of the order of things.* And while we know that there are these laws, and that disobedience to them means pain and suffering, perhaps death; — while we know that fire burns and water drowns; while we know that the burn, if severe enough, leaves a scar which time never effaces; that the body if abused long enough is never again renewed in its perfection; that the mind if debased suffers to the full quota of its disgrace; that the moral nature if disregarded or perverted runs wild and is filled with all shame and corruption, which years of repentance and perhaps even the cycles of the future if that future come will find it difficult to retrieve; — while we know all this, we cannot, with those who commonly interpret Jesus' parable, say, at once upon the prodigal's return, "The father hath received him *safe and*

sound,—come in and make merry." Neither safe nor sound is he. He is indeed, perhaps, on the road to safety, but he is by no means safe yet, either in mind or soul or body. And he is far from being "sound,"—will not be for years, if ever. We may indeed rejoice that he has returned, and receive him gladly, and work with him and for him; but we cannot say, as yet, "bring forth the best robe and put it on him," whether that robe be of material fleece or of spiritual beauty, for he knows not how to wear such; nor "the ring," for it will not fit him.

There is no escape from Consequences. We cannot say it too often, or press it too hard upon the minds of men. Every guilty deed bears in itself the germ of retribution, perhaps of undying pain; and no man and no God can wholly avert that pain. For every disobedience of law, which is, as it were, a debt to Nature, the sinner is thrown into a prison from which he does not escape till he has paid the uttermost farthing; and very often he dies in the prison, with the debt forever unpaid, except by the reversal of his body to the earth whence it sprang. All this is simply Causation,—the ongoing of the universe's justice. And neither mercy nor forgiveness can ever come in until justice is satisfied.

I know of but one apparent exception to this, and even that one is indeed an exception only apparent. If a man sin against the laws of his body, against his physical well-being, swift or slow, soon or late, he feels the smart, and knows it. It may be immediately; it often is: and it may not be for years. When the smart comes, the man may perhaps have utterly forgotten the deed that brought the smart, so that he sits in astonishment at his pain. But Nature has not forgotten. She has had it in mind all along, and now her whip scourges and her rack tortures. Again, if a man sin against his moral and spiritual nature, by dishonesty, by injustice, by fraud, by pandering to ununholy passions, by giving way to vices of thought and emotion, by leading others into sin,—if he is a man with a conscience, soon or late the hell of remorse seizes hold upon him, and he is shaken and wracked and humiliated *and damned* by the evil spectres of his remembered sin. Comes Joaquin Miller to us with words like these:

> "I would some things were dead and hid,
> Well dead and buried as hell,
> With recollection dead as well,
> And resurrection God-forbid.
> They irk me with their weary spell
> Of fascination, eye to eye,
> And hot, mesmeric serpent hiss,
> Through all the dull eternal days.
> Let them turn by, go on their ways,
> Let them depart, or let me die."

But there are men in the world — I have come verily to believe it — and this is the one apparent exception to the law of Causation in the case of evil, of which I spoke; — there are men in the world in whom the moral nature seems to be dead; who possess no conscience; who have no capability of remorse. They sin, and seem to glory in it. They make their homes a hell, and apparently are unconscious of it. At any rate they are careless of it. They keep their wives and children on the rack of torture — have no words of blessing, no kiss of love, no thought for the comfort and happiness of those they have taken to them with solemn promises for life, or for those whom they have brought into the world. They are utterly selfish; and if great crimes are theirs the great crimes trouble them no more than the trifling ones. What then shall we say here? *Is* Causation lulled? Is there no recompense of evil for evil in these cases? Do men here plant thistles and indeed gather figs? No. Look at it a moment. *What makes a man*, above the brute? What distinguishes a man from the lower animal, — from

> " . . . . the beast
> That takes his license in the halls of time
> Unfettered by the sense of crime,
> To whom a conscience never wakes" ?

Is it not the very fact of the possession of the moral nature, the possession of a capacity for loving the good and abhoring the evil, that makes a man a Man? What then are men better than sheep or goats, nay, what better are some men than bears or wolves, if indeed there be within them no moral nature? *Is* Causation stilled? The rather, has it not here done its work well? How terribly! Such men have ceased to be men. They are dead and damned — or as good as that — dead and damned without knowing it!

But I spoke of a soul of truth in the idea Forgiveness. There is such a soul of truth within it. Not in the old sense, — the sense in which the word forgiveness is generally used, both in the Bible and out of it. Not in the sense of "utterly doing away with"; not in the sense which one of the Hebrew Psalmists had in mind when he prayed that his sin might be "covered up." There *is* no *absolute* forgiveness. And it would not be well for the world — for the sinner or the sinned against — to have evil "covered up," "forgiven and forgotten" as we say, even if such could be. If the father in the parable should indeed in *word* "forgive" the prodigal, penitent and returned, would the prodigal indeed thereupon immediately be "fully restored"? Would the physical deformity and disease ensuing on account of his dissipations and excesses be at once removed? Would the debased fibres and corpuscles

of his brain be repaired? Would memory be blotted out? Would the evil incentives given to others by his life and example be relieved of their force, and the wrong which these had already accomplished in ever widening circles be retrieved? Would the sorrow and pain and disgrace and loss ensuing to others through his guilt be done away with, and made as if they had never been? In a word, Could the prodigal ever be the same man again, physically and mentally and spiritually? Or could the facts of human life about him be the same? That would be absolute forgiveness. But there is no absolute forgiveness of such wrong. Sin is never thus blotted out or "covered up," nor its consequences wholly done away with.

But nevertheless, Nature is very kind. The soul of things is good. Let those who have sinned, however deeply, only once turn, as did the prodigal, or be helped to turn by those about them, and all the universe is at their back to aid. If the sin has been of a physical character, all the myriad forces of Nature set to work at once to begin to repair the damage the man has ignorantly or wilfully done himself. And in the generality of cases, where the perversion has not been too severe, a tolerable cure is in time —after many days or years—effected, by the gracious presence and power of Nature's ministers. The Abbè Trembly,—quoted by Prof. Huxley,—many years ago demonstrated that there are certain among the lower forms of animal life, to which, however mutilated by knife or accident, Nature immediately gives her attention, and reproduces perfect limbs and parts entire, for those dissevered. In a multitude of ways Nature operates to retrieve what man's passion and wilfulness destroy or enfeeble. But in the case of man, she is rarely kind enough to renew his self-inflicted deformities entire.

Such things as these are things physical, and of the individual. What of evil done to others?—can *that* ever be atoned for? Alas, what can we say! But is there not a little of hope even here? Can it not in part be atoned for, perhaps,—by methods of succeeding faithfulness and care? And may not all moral and mental and spiritual deficiencies be likewise, in *some* sort, retrieved? There is hope for all—strong hope. Nature never "forgives and forgets," but she is kind, and helpful, forbearing oftentimes, and earnest in her co-operation with fresh human resolve and determination.

Resolve and determination—and new endeavor. Here, in brief phrase, is the *true* "Forgiveness" and the only Forgiveness. For it is a forgiveness which implies, not a "covering up," but a new growth, a fresh start: which is far better than a "covering up," inasmuch as it means—

not prostrate pain, not eternal despair, nor unrighteous *immediate* restoration without ethical equivalent,—but true nobility; exaltation and progress; a redeemed humanity in the only sense in which the universe by any means permits redemption. It means struggle, long, patient, active, undespairing; it means faithful co-operation with all powers of good, with all instrumentalities of growth and virtue and kindliness and good-will. It means purity and peace that are worth something; it means health and buoyancy that are legitimately acquired, honestly possessed. It means a noble independence; a faithful use of the opportunities of life.

That is the whole of it. And for us all, there is forgiveness such as this. Let us never look for, or expect, forgiveness *absolute* for evil; a "covering up." We shall look in vain and shall but deceive ourselves. But a fresh start we all can have. And this we should attempt to give also —and always be willing to give—to others. Working thus, the universe and all its powers are on our side; all the forces of the worlds give hope and energy to our struggle; the end shall crown with happiness and peace. Working in the old way, we are simply mocked; religion, proffering men a kiss, flings instead, about them, when they reach to receive it, the shirt of Nessus.

James H. West.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO LIBERAL WOMEN.

Arrangements have been perfected for organizing a Woman's Liberal Association of a national character. Its necessity has become apparent.

First, the present Woman Suffrage Societies having long grown conservative, it is imperative that a new Society should be formed, of brave, far-seeing women, who will not hesitate to take advancing steps as need demands.

Second, "the Christian Party in Politics," whose aim—a union of church and State—was discovered by Frances Wright more than sixty years since, was never more definite, never more sanguine of success, than at present. Its chief aid, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, at its recent Chicago Convention, passed a resolution to the effect that, as Christ is the King of Nations, he should be thus recognized in our government and laws. This resolution is of the same general character as the platform of the National Reform Association, a body largely officered by clergymen who do not hesitate to avow their intention to introduce an amendment of this character into the Federal Constitution, thus changing the nature of our government from its intended secular form to that of a religious despotism.

It is time, therefore, that women of Liberal thought should unite, not alone to work for their own enfranchisement, but also

to arouse public thought to the impending danger to free institutions.

A Convention for this purpose will be held in Washington, D. C., Feb. 24 and 25, 1890. All persons in sympathy with this design are invited to correspond with Matilda Joslyn Gage, Fayetteville, N. Y., to whom contributions in its aid may also be forwarded.

MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE.

HOW TO HELP THE COLORED MAN.

WE all know that the condition of the colored man is not yet all it should be; and that one of the things which help to keep him down is the large amount of prejudice, even at the North. As the managers of the Free Religious Association, as well as of various philanthropic and denominational organizations, are already making arrangements for the May meetings at Boston and New York, I take the liberty of suggesting that a prominent place be given to colored speakers. Let Boston tell other cities that there is at least one place in America where there is no color-line.

It would not be possible this year to have Mr. Douglass on the platform of the F. R. A.; but why not make him a Vice-President? Is there a single man or woman on that list who would not be glad to resign in his favor? He has already shown his complete sympathy with our cause. He is far in advance of most colored men in this respect, as in others; but there are several orators on his side of the house who are known to hold very advanced views, for instance, that brilliant scholar, Professor Greener. The F. R. A. is giving a large place to the labor problem. Why not hear some champion of the most oppressed class of laborers?

F. M. HOLLAND.

NOTES.

FELICITATION.

LET me felicitate you on your January number. It fully meets my demand. It is solid and thoughtful; questioning but considerate. It is interesting, yet not loud or boastful or flippant. It is searching and sanguine, yet earnest, and concerned with impending problems.

O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

LOOKING FORWARD.

I SHOULD like to see a hundred such magazines in the country. Perhaps you will assent more enthusiastically, however, if I modify this aspiration, as I hasten to do, into a wish that your own circulation may be a hundred-fold increased, which would be just as well for the country and rather better for yourself.

EDWARD BELLAMY.

A LOFTY PURPOSE.

IN contributing to THE NEW IDEAL I shall feel that I am striving for a lofty purpose, in company with high-minded fellow-workers.

EDMUND MONTGOMERY.